

Appl. No. 10/726,499  
Amendment dated June 14, 2005  
Reply to Office Action of February 23, 2005

**AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:**

The attached sheet of drawings includes a change to Figure 3. This sheet, which includes Figure 3, replaces the original sheet including Figure 3.

Attachment: one (1) replacement sheet

### REMARKS

In the February 23, 2005 Office Action, the drawings were objected to and claims 1-5 stand rejected in view of prior art. Claims 3 and 4 also were rejected for failing to indicate and to claim particularly and distinctly the subject matter that Applicants regard as the invention. In the February 23, 2005 Office Action, all of the claims stand rejected in view of prior art. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

#### ***Status of Claims and Amendments***

In response to the February 23, 2005 Office Action, Applicants have amended claims 1-5 as indicated above. Further, claims 6-20 have been added. Thus, claims 1-20 are pending, with claims 1, 8, and 14 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of above amendments and the following comments.

#### ***Drawings***

On page 2 of the Office Action, the drawings were objected to because the lead line for reference character "31a" was misdirected in Figure 3. In response, Applicants have filed a corrected drawing. Applicants believe that the drawings are now correct. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objections.

#### ***Claim Objection***

On page 3 of the Office Action, claim 5 was objected to because in each of lines 3 and 4 "sheet" thereof should read -- seat--. In response, Applicants have amended the recitation in line 3 and deleted the recitation in line 4. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objections.

#### ***Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §112***

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 3 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. In response, Applicants have amended claim 3 to clarify claims 3 and 4.

Specifically, claim 3 has been amended to delete the terms “high” and “low.” Claim 3 now recites that the seat body is made of a metal.

Applicants believe that the claims now comply with 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

***Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102***

On page 4 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 3-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,899,617 (Kobayashi et al.). Further, claims 1-3 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,255,640 (Pierce). In response, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to define clearly the present invention over the prior art of record. Further, claim 5 was rewritten to depend on claim 1.

In particular, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite that the sliding portion is mounted over an outer side of the spring extending in the compression direction. As seen in Figures 1, 4, and 5 of Kobayashi et al., Kobayashi et al. disclose a spring seat that has a sliding portion 23 or 30 that is not arranged over the outer side of the spring in the compression direction. Further, as seen in Figures 3 and 4 of Pierce, Pierce also fails to disclose a sliding portion II that is mounted over an outer side of the spring in the compression direction.

Clearly, this structure is ***not*** disclosed or suggested by Kobayashi et al., Pierce, or any other prior art of record. It is well settled under U.S. patent law that for a reference to anticipate a claim, the reference must disclose each element of the claim within the reference.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, as now amended, is not anticipated by the prior art of record. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Moreover, Applicants believe that the dependent 2-5 are also allowable over the prior art of record in that they depend from independent claim 1, and therefore are allowable for the reasons stated above. Also, the dependent claims are further allowable because they include additional limitations. Thus, Applicants believe that since the prior art of record does not anticipate the independent claim 1, neither does the prior art anticipate the dependent claims.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

***New Claims - 6-20***

New claims 6-20 have been added. Claims 6 depends on claim 2 and claim 7 depends on claim 5. Thus, Applicants believe that these claims are allowable for the reasons stated above. Claim 8 recites a spring assembly that is similar to original claim 1 and includes a float body. Claims 9-13 ultimately depend on claim 8. Claim 14 recites a clutch disk assembly that has spring assembly of original claim 1. Claims 15-20 ultimately depend on claim 14. Examination and consideration are respectfully requested.

***Prior Art Citation***

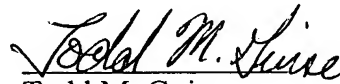
In the Office Action, additional prior art references were made of record. Applicants believe that these references do not render the claimed invention obvious.

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In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 1-20 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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